YOU'LL BE FINE. I JUST KNOCKED THE WIND OUT OF YOU.
IF THIS WAS "REAL," I COULD HAVE STRUCK YOU IN THE TRACHEA AND CRUSHED IT. YOU MIGHT HAVE KILLED ME, BUT YOU'D HAVE SUFFOCATED TO DEATH.
THE POINT OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO SHOW YOU NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE ANY OPPONENT. EVEN AN UNARMED, NON-POWERED MAN, WITH THE PROPER TRAINING, CAN BE LETHAL.
WELL PUT, STEVE. AND YOU'RE RIGHT...I SHOULD REINFORCE SOME OF JENNIFER'S VULNERABLE POINTS. IT'S A QUESTION OF PROTECTION VERSUS FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT...
VEIL, I KNOW YOU HAVE TO LEARN THE CHEMICAL MAKEUP OF GASES BEFORE YOU CAN CHANGE INTO THEM, BUT DON'T UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF BASIC FOG.
NINJA HAVE USED THE CONCEPT OF "METSUBUSHI," OR "EYE CLOSERS," FOR CENTURIES. A BLINDED OPPONENT IS A HELPLESS OPPONENT. I HAVE A BOOK I CAN LEND YOU...
OH, WOW. WAIT'LL MY GRANDDAD HEARS I BORROWED A BOOK FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA!
I'M NOT CAPTAIN AMERICA ANYMORE. YOU CAN CALL ME "STEVE."
YEAH, WELL, I'VE GOT A QUESTION FOR YOU, "STEVE." WHEN DO WE GET THE PUBLIC CEREMONY?
YOU KNOW--CAMERAS AND BALLOONS AND "THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH," YOU INTRODUCING US AS THE AVENGERS OF THE FUTURE.
WE'RE A WAYS AWAY FROM THAT.
WHY? YOU WAITED, LIKE, THIRTY SECONDS TO INTRODUCE QUICKSILVER, AND HE WAS A BAD GUY.
QUICK-SILVER HAD TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE.
YEAH, RIGHT. YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING US IN THE CLOSET SINCE THE DAY WE GOT HERE. NEVER EVEN SAID WE EXIST.
ADMIT IT. YOU'RE ASHAMED OF US.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL

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Hey, True Believers! Hope you enjoyed the terrific art by my old *Avengers: The Initiative* collaborator, Jorge Molina! It was a real pleasure working with you again, Jorge! Now on to your letters:

I've been collecting Avengers books for almost ten years now – my first ever Avengers book was something I got myself for my birthday. That was #34 (the last one by George Perez). The last time I sent a letter to Marvel, it made it into the letters page of *Avengers #56* (Kurt Busiek's last issue). Anyway, I just wanna say that *Academy* brings me back to those good old days. With *Academy,* I also feel like I have *Initiative, Mighty Avengers* and *Young Avengers* in one book. Kudos to you, Christos and Mike! It's my favorite Avengers title at the moment! In October, it's gonna be my birthday and my tenth anniversary as a loyal Avengers fan, I hope you could print this letter as a special gift for me. Thanks, guys!

Niki Yarte
Philippines

Happy birthday, Niki…and thanks for the high praise! Kurt and George's run was a favorite of mine as well. I hope AVENGERS ACADEMY will be around to celebrate your 20th anniversary as an Avengers reader!

First and foremost I would like to thank you, the whole creative team, for your efforts to create a comic book like this. I think every Avengers (and not only) fan on our blue & green planet can appreciate the great work you do.

The art done by McKone/Hennessy/Cox is on very high level. I'm a fan of Spider-Man as well, so I came across Mr. McKone's (and Mr. Cox's coloring as well) work there and I think he always gives the best he has got. He is the right man doing the right thing. When you look at the art in this book you can tell that the whole art team has to like working together.

I have two questions (for now) as well, please.

1. In Hazmat's room there are two posters on the wall. I can recognize Dazzler on one (whose idea was it, please? – just curious), but I'm not sure about the other one (a guy in the green vest). The person looks like nobody specific – is he maybe somebody from the comic book crew? I think that was a great job to put loads of details into Hazmat's room. It puts some life into four walls, even if action takes place in it only for a few pages.

2. Can you tell me who was the fiend-like prisoner, please? That bugs me as well.

I would like to ask you to never stop doing such a great mainstream comic book, and to put as much small detail into it as you can. I think I can speak for everybody who reads the book – we love it and we want more of it. All the best wishes to the whole team from your devoted Polish fan.

Pawel Omernik
Koszwaly, Poland

Pawel, thanks so much for the kind words! To answer your questions, I think that was indeed "no one in particular" on the second poster, though I did mention Rick Jones in the script, so maybe it was him. The Dazzler poster was my idea…I love showing her disco costume whenever possible! The fiend-like prisoner was Spider-Man's old enemy, Vermin. I'm glad you appreciated the details of Hazmat's room. Mike puts a lot of thought into locations, modeling them exhaustively to make them feel real…just one of the reasons we love him!

Hi, my name is Chris. I have been a Marvel nerd since I was 12. I have actually never really liked or followed the Avengers. Deadpool has been my favorite super hero since always. *Avengers Academy* changed that. I was short on cash yesterday and I had the choice to get *Deadpool #26* or *Avengers Academy #3*. I chose *Academy*. You have actually inspired me to try to get my comic book series published. I want to know if I could thank you guys in the first issue. I am actually writing this on my 15th birthday, so please!!!!!!!

Chris Thompson
Hammondsport, New York

Ha! You got SERVED, Deadpool! Chris, it's an honor to have inspired your creative efforts, and I think I speak for the entire creative team when I say it would be a pleasure to be thanked in your first issue. And happy birthday…it seems to be the month for them! I sent in my very first story pitch to Marvel when I was your age. It wasn't until 18 years later that I actually got to write a Marvel comic, so keep writing, keep honing your skills and don't give up! By the way, my mid-1980s pitch was about a fight between the Blob and the Juggernaut…if the Juggernaut's unstoppable and the Blob's immovable, what happens when they fight? Don't you want to know? Axel Alonso, are you listening???

Christos, Mike, and everyone else making *Avengers Academy* the awesome title it is, I have to say thanks. I was a little hesitant at first to give this new title a chance when so many Marvel books held the Avengers name in them. However, always a fan of Mike McKone and Christos Gage, I figured I'd give it a shot. I am SO glad that I did. Creating such an interesting depth to the characters by making them potential villains has made every moment a question as to what path they will choose. But most importantly, issue #2 delved into one of Marvel's greatest characters, Quicksilver, in one of the coolest ways possible. I loved seeing the "behind the super hero" style character bio. Please tell me you guys have much more in store for comic's greatest speedster.

Mathias Lewis
Oceanside, Ca

We do, Mathias…in our very next issue! Since I started writing this book I have become aware that Quicksilver has a very loyal fan base…stay tuned, there's a lot more to come with him! And be sure to pick up *Avengers: Children's Crusade*, since Pietro is a big part of that book as well.

We'd also like to recognize those who wrote but whose letters we didn't have room for: Kevin Forbes; Nathan Little, who says he thinks After School Special is a good name for the letters column even though he wasn't alive in the '80s, which makes me feel both happy and ancient at the same time; and Tyler Hamilton (Tyler, some Initiative characters might show up down the road, but for now we're focused on our already large cast). We read and appreciate all your comments…so keep 'em coming!

Now here's a question for you: what characters – villains or guest stars – would you like to see in this book and why? My favorite answer wins a signed VARIANT COVER COPY of issue #1!

Next issue, Mike McKone returns as we focus on Reptil…see how the relationship between Finesse and Quicksilver is developing…and our heroes battle the villainy of Mentallo! And did I really manage to fit a gratuitous Devil Dinosaur cameo into this book? I'm shameless, I tell you! Hope to see you then!

-Christos Gage

NEXT!

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